

UCLA Faculty Association

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Monday, February 10, 2025

Demolition - Part 3



From the [LA Times](#): President Trump signaled his plans Tuesday to diminish the U.S. Department of Education, saying that he has told Secretary-Designate Linda McMahon that he wants her to "put herself out of a job" and that he would work with Congress and teachers unions to achieve his goal of turning education over to the states...

The department's K-12 programs serve more than 50 million students attending 130,000 public and private schools; **federal grant, loan, and work-study assistance benefits more than 13 million post-secondary students**. Student loans also fall under the department's authority. Conservatives have criticized the student loan process, with

Republican states successfully suing the Biden administration over its multiple attempts to cancel wide swaths of the nation's ballooning federal student loan debt. According to the Education Department, the government is owed more than \$1.5 trillion in student loans by more than 43 million Americans...

California has a massive stake in how the department is run. The state receives more than \$2.1 billion in Title I grants to counteract the effects of poverty — more than any other state — with \$417 million provided to Los Angeles Unified, the nation's second-largest school system, according to the California Department of Education. More than 200,000 low-income students in the California State University system, the largest and most diverse four-year higher education system in the nation, annually rely on \$1 billion in federal Pell grants to afford college. At the University of California, more than 80,000 undergraduate students received about \$454 million in Pell Grants in the 2023-24 academic year...

Full story at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-02-04/trump-to-diminish-education-department-financial-aid-fate-uncertain>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:



Labels: [CSU](#), [politics](#), [UC](#)

Slasher

From [Ars Technica](#): Sometime during the next several weeks, the directors of federal agencies will receive a draft version of President Trump's budget request for the coming fiscal year, which begins on October 1. This "passback review" is a standard part of the federal budgeting process which ends in Congress writing a budget and the president signing it into law.

The budget request will be the first of President Trump's second term, and it will offer a clear window into the priorities of his new administration. Although widespread cuts are expected for

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much of the government's discretionary spending, the outlook for the National Science Foundation appears to be especially grim.

During an emotional all-hands meeting on Tuesday, the agency's assistant director for engineering, Susan Margulies, told agency employees to expect between a quarter and a half of its staff to be laid off within the coming months, E&E News reported.



[Last] Thursday, two sources told Ars that the science agency should expect to see steep cuts in Trump's forthcoming budget request. In recent years, the National Science Foundation has received an annual budget of approximately \$9 billion, the vast majority of which is spent on research and research-related activities. The cuts could be as deep as 66 percent, with one person indicating the top-line budget number for the National Science Foundation could start at \$3 billion.

Such a massive cut is not out of line with a proposal made by Russ Vought for the fiscal year 2023 budget as part of his Center for Renewing America. Vought is expected to become the White House budget director in the coming days. Three years ago, Vought proposed cutting the National Science Foundation budget to \$3.9 billion. The cuts, he wrote, would require NSF "to make better decisions and target grants to actual research that will benefit the whole country, not just propagandize for woke ideology." ...

There are important caveats to this proposal. The Trump administration has probably not even settled upon the numbers that will go into its draft budget, which then goes through the passback process in which there are additional changes. And then, of course, the budget request is just a starting point for negotiations with the US Congress, which sets budget levels. Even so, such cuts could prove disastrous for the US science community...

Full story at <https://arstechnica.com/science/2025/02/white-house-budget-proposal-could-shatter-the-national-science-foundation/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:     

Labels: politics

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Demolition - Part 2



From the Wall St. Journal: Trump administration officials are weighing executive actions to dismantle the Education Department as part of the campaign by billionaire Elon Musk and his allies to shrink federal agencies and slash the size of the government workforce.

The officials have discussed an executive order that would shut down all functions of the agency that aren't written explicitly into statute or move certain functions to other departments, according to people familiar with the matter. The order would call for developing a legislative proposal to abolish the department, the people said. Trump's advisers are debating the specifics of the order and the

timing, the people said...

Some administration officials, including the team working with Education Secretary nominee Linda McMahon, say the White House should wait to release any executive order until after McMahon's Senate confirmation hearing, people familiar with the matter said. McMahon's hearing hasn't been scheduled, as the Senate is awaiting her ethics paperwork. Some Trump advisers worried that the White House's recent freeze on federal assistance complicated Russell Vought's confirmation as director of the Office of Management and Budget, and they are eager to avoid a similar scenario that could endanger McMahon...

- California Faculty Association (NEA)
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Full story at <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/education-department-trump-executive-order-eeaf1cb6>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments:     

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UCLA Anderson Forecast on Cost of Fires



From "Economic Impact of the Los Angeles Wildfires," by Zhiyun Li and William Yu.

Summary: *The estimated economic impact of L.A. wildfires in January 2025 is as follows. It is important to note that these estimates are preliminary, based on various assumptions, and may be updated:*

(1) *Total property and capital losses could range between \$95 billion and \$164 billion, with insured losses estimated at \$75 billion.*

(2) *A reduction of GDP by \$4.6 billion, a 0.48% decline in GDP, with a loss of wages of local business and employees totaling \$297 million in 2025.*

(3) *Without significant and effective wildfire mitigation actions and investments, all California residents will face continued increases in insurance premiums and growing health concerns.*

(4) *L.A. housing markets, in particular for rental units, will become increasingly unaffordable.*

(5) *Local governments are likely to increase spending post-wildfires.*

In addition to significant economic losses, the toll of human life by wildfires has not been fully accounted for. To combat the escalating risks posed by climate change, California's foremost priority should be to invest comprehensively in wildfire mitigation strategies. These include advancing firefighting techniques, adopting technology such as AI and drones for detecting and extinguishing wildfires, managing forests and brush, upgrading utilities infrastructure, controlling homeless encampment, rethinking water resource management, strengthening building codes, and subsidizing home hardening. We suggest that all adaptation and mitigation investments will be justified, considering the astronomical costs associated with wildfires.

For example, California's 2008 regulations on building codes require buildings in fire-prone regions to be designed to reduce wildfire risks. ... (H)omes built post-2008 are less likely to be destroyed during a wildfire. However, much of L.A.'s housing stock predates these regulations, leaving many homes vulnerable to ignition. California has launched a grant program to support home hardening in several counties, but given the vast number of homes needing upgrades, it is imperative to expand strategic local and state grant programs targeted at homeowners below a certain income level to effectively meet this demand. In addition, insurers can play a crucial role in wildfire risk mitigation. By offering financial incentives, such as discounts to homeowners who install safety features like sprinklers, insurers can decrease the likelihood of homes being destroyed in wildfires and reduce the number of insurance claims following such incidents.

Full report at <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires#15>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [health care](#), [UCLA](#)

The 15% Cap

From the [Washington Post](#): *The Trump administration is cutting billions of dollars in biomedical research funding, alarming academic leaders who said it would imperil their universities and*

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medical centers and drawing swift rebukes from Democrats who predicted dire consequences for scientific research.

The move, announced Friday night by the National Institutes of Health, drastically cuts NIH's funding for "indirect" costs related to research. These are the administrative requirements, facilities and other operations that many scientists say are essential but that some Republicans have claimed are superfluous.

"The United States should have the best medical research in the world," NIH said in its announcement. "It is accordingly vital to ensure that as many funds as possible go towards direct scientific research costs rather than administrative overhead." ...

In its announcement, NIH said that on average, the overhead rate has been about 27 to 28 percent of the direct research funding in the grant but that "many organizations" charge indirect rates of over 50 percent and in some cases more than 60 percent. **The agency's new policy will cap the rate at 15 percent and take effect on Monday, cutting tens of millions of dollars or more in funding for many universities — virtually overnight...**

Full story at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/02/08/nih-cuts-billions-dollars-biomedical-funding-effective-immediately/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:   

Labels: [health care](#), [politics](#)

Saturday, February 8, 2025



Another Lawsuit - and another



From the [San Francisco Chronicle](#):
...The University of California's student government sued the U.S. Department of Education Friday, accusing the office of illegally sharing the personal financial information of millions of student loan borrowers with Elon Musk and other private individuals who are unauthorized to see the data.

The lawsuit by the UC Student Association — representing 230,000 undergraduates, 70% of whom

receive federal student aid — asks a federal judge in Washington D.C. to stop the Education Department from sharing the information with Musk and other unknown people affiliated with President Donald Trump's new Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE.

In addition to students' names, addresses and phone numbers, the data for roughly 42 million borrowers includes bank account information, Social Security numbers, tax identification numbers, credit reports, drivers licenses and personal signatures — as well as similar information for family members, the suit says...

Full story at <https://www.sfchronicle.com/california/article/uc-lawsuit-elon-musk-20154087.php>.

Note: It is also reported that a judge has blocked Musk/DOGE from access to US Treasury records. That decision may or may not render the UC lawsuit moot, at least for a temporary period. From the [NY Times](#): A federal judge early Saturday temporarily restricted access by Elon Musk's government efficiency program to the Treasury Department's payment and data systems, saying there was a risk of "irreparable harm."

The Trump administration's new policy of allowing political appointees and "special government employees" access to these systems, which contain highly sensitive information such as bank

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Contributors

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details, heightens the risk of leaks and of the systems becoming more vulnerable than before to hacking, U.S. District Judge Paul A. Engelmayer said in an emergency order.

Judge Engelmayer ordered any such official who had been granted access to the systems since Jan. 20 to "destroy any and all copies of material downloaded from the Treasury Department's records and systems." He also restricted the Trump administration from granting access to those categories of officials... The situation could pose a fundamental test of America's rule of law. If the administration fails to comply with the emergency order, it is unclear how it might be enforced...

Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/07/nyregion/attorneys-general-trump-musk-suit.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [10:03 AM](#) No comments:     

Labels: [politics](#), [UC](#)

A bit of history



CUCFA has sent out the notice below:

We write to inform you that at UCOP's request, the Academic Planning Council (APC) has convened a joint Senate-Administration workgroup focused on the possibility of a common systemwide semester calendar. You can see its charge, composition, and plans here. The workgroup aims to issue its report in Spring 2025.

While the charge refers to a "common" calendar, UCOP's background paper makes clear that the impetus behind this initiative is to make seven campuses that teach on a quarter system shift to the semester system adopted by two. Systemwide Senate leadership has further confirmed that the workgroup's report and recommendations will not be put to a vote by each divisional Senate. Rather, each division will be invited to provide comments that the systemwide Senate will then share with the APC and UCOP, as well as the Board of Regents, who are the ultimate decision-making body.

Needless to say, the impacts of such a change—logistically, administratively, financially, on student learning outcomes and faculty/staff working conditions—are potentially massive. As we currently understand the process, there is no guaranteed opportunity for faculty to accept or reject these changes; instead, we can only provide comments and input via the workgroup...

Full notice with opportunity for input at <https://cucfa.org/2025/01/common-systemwide-calendar-workgroup/>.

Some background: Back in the 1960s, when an influx of baby boomers was looming, the quarter system was adopted with the notion that with four quarters, i.e., year-round operation, UC could save on the capital expenditures needed to cope with the influx. Every program and course had to be converted from a semester format to a quarter format. But then it turned out that students didn't want to attend in the summer. So the quarter system failed to be the panacea for enrolling the baby boom. If anything, it was somewhat wasteful because it extended the three-quarter year due to the need for two intersessions rather than one.

Still, there wasn't a lot of sentiment for going through another exercise of converting every course and program back to semesters. Only Berkeley eventually did it. Merced, which was created long after the 1960s, also operates on semesters. Some parts of UCLA, e.g., law, use the semester format, which creates complications when students are in joint programs, e.g., Law-MPP.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:35 AM](#) No comments:     

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